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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RHMFISS/425ABG IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY

RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY

RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001722

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV TU IZ

SUBJECT: TURKEY SHARES CONCERN ON KHANAQIN STABILITY;
STILL PLANS TO HOST IRAQ INVESTMENT CONFERENCE THIS FALL

Classified By: Pol Counselor Daniel O'Grady for reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey is as concerned as the United States about stability in Iraq in light of events in recent weeks in the Khanaqin area of Diyala Province and the stand-off between Peshmerga and the IAF, according to MFA Iraq Desk Officer Can Oguz. The GOT has no intention of taking actions that could contribute to or exacerbate Kurd-Arab tensions in Iraq. The focus of Iranian concerns expressed to GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Murat Ozcelik during his recent visit to Tehran was on the continued presence of U.S. troops in Iraq, not on arriving at some form of agreement or common cause vis-a-vis the future status of Kirkuk or Iraqi Kurdish autonomy. Ozcelik remains committed to meeting directly with KRG President Barzani in Baghdad as soon as possible, though GOT officials continue to have no success in scheduling the meeting. Turkey still hopes to host an Iraq Investment Conference this Fall. Ozcelik spoke with Iraqi VP Abdul Mehdi about this during his recent visit to Baghdad, but much needs to be done if they are to be successful in attracting sufficient attention from international investors. The GOT also wants to move ahead with the first meeting of the Turkey-Iraq Strategic Cooperation Council soon. FM Babacan was to have raised this with FM Zebari in a meeting in New York this week. Ozcelik should be in Ankara the week of October 6 and able to meet with S/I Satterfield in Ankara.
END SUMMARY

Iraq's Stability Key for Turkey

¶2. (C) MFA Iraq Desk Officer Can Oguz told us September 25 that Turkey is concerned about the growing schism between Kurds and Arabs in Iraq and noted such a development is not in Turkey's interests. Following a lengthy discussion on recent events in the Khanaqin area of Diyala Province and the stand-off between Peshmerga and the IAF, we underscored the importance for Turkey to avoid taking actions in its fight against PKK terrorists along its border with Iraq that could contribute to or exacerbate tensions in Iraq. Oguz responded that Iraq's stability remains critically important for the GOT and Turkey understands the delicate balance that must be maintained.

GOT Still Seeking Barzani Meeting

¶13. (C) Noting Turkey's struggle with PKK terrorism would be much easier if the KRG took more forceful steps to counter the PKK's presence in northern Iraq, Oguz said Murat Ozcelik continues to seek a meeting with KRG President Massoud Barzani in Baghdad. Given that the latter does not travel to Baghdad often, this has proven difficult. While they are a bit frustrated the meeting has not yet occurred, they will continue efforts to make it happen as soon as possible.

Ozcelik in Tehran...A Turkey-Iran Deal?

¶14. (C) Oguz said the read-out he had seen from Ozcelik's meetings in Tehran in early September indicate discussions revolved principally around Iran's concerns regarding a continued U.S. troop presence in Iraq and Turkish views as to whether a SOFA between the U.S. and Iraq would be successfully concluded. Oguz was not aware of any discussions that hinted at an effort to strike an agreement on limiting Iraqi Kurdish autonomy or ensuring that Kirkuk did not become part of the Iraqi Kurdish region. Oguz said that is an issue for Iraqis to decide. (NOTE: We will seek to gain further insights into Ozcelik's Tehran visit once he returns to Ankara to determine the degree to which rumors of an Iranian-Turkish "deal" reflect reality or Iranian efforts to demonstrate a level of coordination and cooperation with Turkey that does not exist. END NOTE)

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Investment Conference on Iraq

¶15. (C) Oguz indicated Ozcelik had discussed with VP Abdul Mehdi Turkey's willingness to host an international conference promoting investment in Iraq during Ozcelik's last visit to Baghdad in early September. The GOT realizes the enormity of the task to pull together a successful conference and that its proposed early November time frame is quickly becoming a target the Turks will not be able to meet. Oguz said Ozcelik will need to follow-up yet again with Abdul Mehdi to get the GOI's firm commitment to move forward.

TU-IZ Strategic Cooperation Council

¶16. (C) FM Babacan was to have proposed to FM Zebari on the margins of UNGA this week to hold the first meeting of the Turkey-Iraq Strategic Cooperation Council sometime in October in Turkey. This would be the first meeting of the mechanism proposed by PM Erdogan during his July visit to Baghdad to discuss a wide-ranging number of bilateral issues at the most senior levels of the two governments.

Satterfield-GOT Consultations

¶17. (C) We noted the possibility S/I Satterfield will be in Erbil October 3-5 and then continue on to Ankara for consultations with GOT officials sometime during the week of October 6. Oguz said Ozcelik should be in the office most of that week before traveling to Istanbul October 11 for the expanded neighbors energy working group meeting and subsequent October 12 US-TU-IZ Iraqis gas trilateral. In light of the closure of the Turkish government (and Embassy Ankara) for the end of Ramazan holiday during the week of September 29, Oguz asked for a proposed date for the visit of S/I Satterfield as soon as possible.

<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

WILSON